

***LBI announces LCBGP award to the North Delta Regional Planning and Development District (August 13, 2012)***

The Louisiana Division of Administration (DOA) has announced its Louisiana Communities Broadband Grant Program (LCBGP) award to the North Delta Regional Planning and Development District (North Delta) for its “Closing the Digital Divide Gap – the North and South Cases of Morehouse and Grant Parishes.”

The goals of this project will be focused on engaging entrepreneurs and governmental officials in the two parishes to provide broadband, e-Business, and e-Government training, before providing direct technical assistance to design, build, and launch business or government websites / social media accounts for a minimum of 20 entities in each parish. Specifically, the project will provide for:

- The formation of Information Technology Advisory Councils (ITAC) in each parish, who will engage 20 businesses / local governmental entities to participate in the technical assistance program.
- The Internet Use Survey, which will be developed and administered in each parish to identify the specific needs of the small businesses and governmental agencies in the two parishes.
- Broadband Education and Technical Assistance Program, which will provide program participants with both educational instruction of how broadband, e-Business and e-Government can have an impact in their communities, as well as hands-on training in the development and maintenance of their websites / social media accounts.
- Formal Case Study that will be conducted at the conclusion of the program to assess the impact that this program has on Morehouse and Grant parishes.

LCBGP is a technical assistance program that is designed to fund broadband-related planning and demonstration projects among rural communities that are un-served or underserved by commercial broadband providers. LCBGP is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and requires a 20% project grantee match through cash and/or in-kind contributions.

“This program addresses two needs for Louisiana,” said Brad Smith, State Broadband Grant Program Analyst. “First, this program will serve as a blueprint for getting small, rural businesses online – helping them to expand their markets; second, this program is operating in two areas of the state where broadband adoption rates are below average, so successes here should boost interest among the locals in joining the Digital Nation”.

This marks the ninth award made through the LCBGP, since the program’s inception late last year. LBI staff anticipates making additional awards in the coming weeks and look forward to partnering with award recipients to the benefit of the citizens of the targeted communities.